INL emergency response camera receives R&D 100 Award

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INL' s R&D 100 winner for 2005, Kevin Young, accepted his award at a black tie dinner on Navy Pier in Chicago Oct. 20. He joined 99 other inventors for the special recognition dinner at R&D Magazine's 43rd Anniversary for the award program.

"This event was very special," Young said. "Accepting the R&D 100 Award while representing the Idaho National Laboratory was a real honor. Plus, having the opportunity to talk face to face with so many of today's innovators about tomorrow's amazing technologies was an incredible experience I'll never forget."

Bill Rogers, Associate Laboratory Director for Science and Technology and Chief Research Officer, represented INL and participated in a panel discussion about national laboratories, applying basic science investigation to technology development and the impact inventors have on national laboratories.

INL's first R&D 100 Award winner, Kevin Young, displays with the Visual First Responder camera system, which he designed and built to help provide safe first response to chemical, biological and other hazardous events. The inset photo shows system components. (INL photo by Chris Morgan)

"I was struck by the number of R&D 100 awards that went to the national laboratories," Rogers said. "America's national laboratories are critical to the nation's future in creating solutions to energy security, advancing technology development and improving a global standard of living for everyone."

The Visual First Responder (VFR), market name for INL's Hazmat Camera System, was chosen in intense competition for the coveted award presented by R&D Magazine. As such, VFR is designated one of the top 100 new technologies in the world.

"For this technology to win the R&D 100 Award is a great honor," Young said. "It would not have happened without all the tremendous support I received from management (Ken Watts), technicians, fellow engineers/co-workers, Communications, and Tech Transfer. I am standing on the shoulders of a truly wonderful team."

While it's a first for INL , Idaho's national laboratory has now had at least one winner for the past nine years - and multiple winners in some years.

The system was selected to receive the award by an independent panel of judges and the editors of R&D Magazine. Each year, the magazine selects 100 of the most technologically significant products in the marketplace during the past year.

The Hazmat Camera System is licensed by View Systems Inc.

A significant departure from other wireless video products, the VFR system assists National Guard Civil Support Teams and emergency first responders at chemical and biological disaster scenes by being the first to combine the following features:

- Transmits at a lower frequency for improved signal penetration through buildings
- Uses a true diversity receiver to provide interference-free images where metal and other objects cause reflected signal multipathing problems
- Employs video encryption so the system can be used during responses where security is a concern


A suited hazardous materials worker demonstrates the Visual First Responder. Engineer Kevin Young developed the device, which transmits clear images to distant computer monitors so remote teams can see the hazard clearly from afar. (INL photo)

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